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Copy No. 4

24 June 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT : Questions Relating to SNIE 13-9-70, "Chinese Reactions to Possible Developments in Indochina"

REFERENCE : Your memorandum to the Director of Central Intelligence, dated 18 June 1970, same Subject

1. The discussion in paragraph 5 was not intended to exclude possible concern on Peking's part that allied actions in Cambodia, South Vietnam, or Laos might, in time, result in a GVN increasingly able to take care of itself (or a Hanoi less willing and able to sustain a protracted struggle). We did not feel, however, that this concern would be overriding in the near term; indeed, Peking's sponsorship of the "Indochina Peoples Conference" seemed to attest to Chinese Communist confidence that Hanoi was prepared to carry on with the struggle on a somewhat broader front. We do mention these concerns briefly in paragraph 8 but we reserved judgment on the matter until the final 3 paragraphs (24-26).

2. We cannot, of course, "prove" the contention in paragraph 26 that China would not change its basic approach of the past decade or more if it concluded that the GVN was becoming so strong as to frustrate Hanoi's ambitions for the indefinite future. But Peking's conduct over the past 20 years provides support to the view that it is guided by Mao's injunction that revolutionary movements must rely primarily on their own efforts (revolution cannot be imposed by external forces) and that time is on the side of China and the revolution in Asia. The Chinese have consistently declared that the US is being moved by the ineluctable forces of history to withdraw from Asia, and we drew the implication that Peking sees no need to hasten the process by taking a direct and active role in the armed

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struggle in Indochina. China is publicly committed to support Hanoi's efforts in the struggle, but it is not publicly committed to the achievement of Hanoi's goals in any definite time. Just as it has lived with a US-supported South Korea, and a US-supported GRC on the "national" soil of Taiwan, it could live with a strengthened GVN in Saigon.

3. The same general explanation applies to paragraphs 12 and 13. We would not characterize the Chinese as entirely relaxed and optimistic over the implications of developments in Cambodia, but the Chinese have given no sign by word or deed which suggests fear that Hanoi cannot cope with its new difficulties. The minimum Vietnamese Communist requirements in Cambodia are to maintain a sufficient flow of replacements and supplies to sustain operations in South Vietnam at or near the low levels of the past year. While we have no hard intelligence on how the Chinese view Hanoi's prospects for meeting these minimum requirements, their public statements, together with some limited evidence from covert sources, persuade us that they are reasonably confident about the prospects. As remarked above, Peking seems to believe that the US is in process of withdrawal from Vietnam, and it probably concludes -- though we cannot support this judgment with specific evidence -- that the ARVN will find it difficult to mount a sustained and large-scale effort against Communist forces and lines of communication in Cambodia.

4. As for the potential of the Cambodian army, we have our own low estimate, plus the confirming opinion of [redacted] Chinese personnel have been closely associated with Cambodian armed forces in the recent past, and we see no reason why they should doubt that these forces would require a lengthy and expensive period of training and supply before they could pose any kind of a serious threat to Communist forces in the key areas adjacent to South Vietnam.

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5. The point with respect to paragraph 14 is well taken. The Chinese cannot increase insurgent pressures in Thailand to any level at will. But the insurgents probably do have the capability, at some cost, to undertake dramatic acts of sabotage or terror in the main areas of activity in the north and northeast of Thailand, and perhaps also in regions closer to Bangkok. While these might be one shot events, they could have the effect of impressing Bangkok with the longer term risks of deep involvement in Cambodia and Laos.

**ABBOT SMITH**  
Director  
National Estimates

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